

American Library Resources on Asia

The rapid expansion of Asian resources in American libraries has presented a number of problems partly because of the diversity and "non-Western" nature of Asian cultures and languages. Published sources fail to give a good overall view of existing resources. The contents and scope of many small but valuable collections remain unknown; even the resources of many major collections have not yet been extensively studied, fully analyzed, and systematically surveyed. This paper traces the beginning and development of Asian resources in American libraries, discusses some of the problems presented by the expansion of these resources, and suggests several approaches to the problems discussed.

AMERICAN SCHOLARSHIP has tended to emphasize the importance of North America and Western Europe, the traditional bases of American education, to the neglect of the world beyond the North Atlantic. Participation in two world wars, the rise and challenge of Communism, and the emergence of many new nations in Asia and Africa, however, have made academic provincialism increasingly untenable. The course of recent history has forced a closer relationship with the rest of the world, not only politically and economically but also intellectually and culturally. Thus, foreign area studies, notably Asian and Russian programs, have rapidly been added to college and university curricula.

As a result of these developments in higher education, hitherto neglected foreign area resources have been incorporated into many libraries to support various area studies programs. The rapid expansion of foreign area resources is one of the most significant develop-

ments in American librarianship during the post-World War II period.

This expansion, however, has presented a number of problems for many American libraries, especially those concerned with Asian resources, partly because of the diversity and "non-Western" nature of Asian cultures and languages. There is no doubt that problems in resources development and control are among the most pressing ones today. Before attempting to discuss some of these problems, this paper will trace briefly the beginning and development of Asian resources in American libraries.

In 1867 the United States entered into negotiations with China and several other foreign governments for an exchange of documents and publications. It was not until two years later, however, in 1869, that an agreement was finally reached with the Chinese Government. Late in that year China sent to the United States some ten Chinese classical and scientific works in about a thousand volumes, which constituted the first noteworthy collection of Asian books received in the United States, and thus marked the beginning of Asian collections in American libraries. Today the collection is on the shelves of the

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Orientalia division of the Library of Congress.¹

Since this first significant acquisition of Asian materials in 1869 more than fifty institutions, mostly academic libraries, have initiated collections of East Asian materials as a result of an expanding interest in Far Eastern studies.² According to a recent survey conducted by the Committee on East Asian Libraries of the Association for Asian Studies, there were in American libraries as of June 30, 1967, a total of 4.4 million volumes of Far Eastern materials in some fifty collections. Of the total, 2.8 million were in Chinese, 1.5 million in Japanese, and 115,000 in Korean and other East Asian languages.³

In contrast with the early beginning and the rapid growth and expansion of East Asian resources, the incorporation of South Asian materials into American libraries was rather late and slow despite the fact that several universities started to offer Sanskrit studies as early as the mid-nineteenth century. Such early studies emphasized the classical Sanskrit tradition.⁴ No notable collections of South Asian materials had been built up until interest in serious work on modern India was developed in the 1920's and 1930's. It was not until 1938 that the Library of Congress established an Indic project, now the South Asia section, to build up a collection of materials on South Asia. Since then, especially since the beginning of World War II, a number of universities have begun to establish such collections. The Public Law 480 Program and the earlier and less successful Farmington Plan have enabled a number of uni-

versities and colleges to acquire South Asian publications. Federal funds, as a result of the enactment of the National Defense Education Act in 1958, and foundation grants have been made available to a number of institutions for developing South Asian resources. To date eighteen research libraries have embarked upon projects to build up these resources.⁵

As for Southeast Asian materials, their systematic introduction into American libraries is a more recent development. The study of Southeast Asia was initiated at Yale, Cornell, and at several other universities shortly after World War II; today Southeast Asian studies are still in their infancy. As a result, only three or four institutions have developed fairly adequate collections; several others are just beginning to acquire Southeast Asian materials.⁶

Before 1945 there were practically no notable collections of South or Southeast Asian materials in the United States. Today at least a dozen institutions have developed fairly large South Asian collections; there are three or four notable collections of Southeast Asian materials, at least one of which, the Cornell collection, is among the best and largest outside Southeast Asia itself. The development of East Asian resources, by comparison, is especially noteworthy, at least statistically. Since the end of World War II, American libraries have almost tripled their East Asian holdings, which reached 4.4 million volumes in 1967, compared with a total of 1.7 million during the period 1946-50.⁷

As early as the 1920's and 1930's librarians and academicians, at first under the auspices of the American Council of Learned Societies, were in com-

¹ Tsuen-hsuei Tsien, "First Chinese-American Exchange of Publications," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, XXV (1964-1965), 19-30.

² Tsuen-hsuei Tsien, "East Asian Collections in America," *Library Quarterly*, XXXV (October 1965), 264.

³ "New Survey of Resources," *Newsletter of the Committee on East Asian Libraries, Association for Asian Studies*, no. 22 (December 15, 1967), 6-8.

⁴ W. Norman Brown, "South Asia Studies: a History," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, CCCLVI (November 1964), 55.

⁵ Maureen L. P. Patterson, "South Asian Area Studies and the Library," *Library Quarterly*, XXXV (October 1965), 228.

⁶ John M. Echols, "The Southeast Asia Program and the Library," *Library Quarterly*, XXXV (October 1965), 243.

⁷ G. Raymond Nunn and Tsuen-hsuei Tsien, "Far Eastern Resources in American Libraries," *Library Quarterly*, XXIX (January 1959), 31.

munication with each other on problems of resources development. Pioneers in this work included Walter T. Swingle, A. Kaiming Chiu, Arthur W. Hummel, Mortimer Graves, Shio Sakanishi, Ryusaku Tsunoda, Gussie Gaskill, and Kan'ichi Asakawa. During the 1940's and 1950's their work was continued by others such as Edwin G. Beal, Jr., Elizabeth Huff, and Osamu Shimizu. In the 1950's the work of the Far Eastern Association-ALA Joint Committee on Oriental Collections was among several serious and organized efforts on the part of both librarians and Far Eastern specialists to discuss problems of growth presented by Asian language materials.⁸ In 1951 the Association of Research Libraries' Committee on National Needs made a study of major Asian collections in America.⁹ Under the sponsorship of the ALA's Special Committee on Far Eastern Materials a survey of Far Eastern collections was conducted in 1958 and a report was published in 1959.¹⁰ In 1957 a conference on South Asian materials was called; the working papers were published late in 1957 and reprinted two years later.¹¹

Since the beginning of this decade more serious and programmed efforts have been undertaken to deal with problems of resources development and control. A number of meetings have been held, agencies established, committees organized, and publications launched. The Association for Asian Studies' Committee on East Asian Libraries, formerly the Committee on American Library Re-

sources on the Far East, which was formed in 1958, has been actively helping to develop East Asian resources;¹² its *Newsletter* frequently publishes acquisitions and survey reports. The South Asia Microform and Library Committee, formerly the Inter-University Committee on South Asian Scholarly Resources, organized in 1962, publishes the *South Asian Library and Research Notes*, formerly *South Asian Microform Newsletter*,¹³ in which much information about existent microfilm and other holdings related to South Asia has been made available. In 1963 the Association for Asian Studies Committee on American Library Resources on Southeast Asia and the East-West Center jointly sponsored a conference to discuss problems in the development of Southeast Asian resources.¹⁴

In 1965 the graduate library school of the University of Chicago held a conference on the impact of area studies on American libraries and librarianship, which was the first concerted forum of scholars and librarians to discuss problems presented by the rapid growth of Asian and other foreign area resources in American libraries.¹⁵ Several papers,

¹² Among many of its important efforts were the publication of a survey of periodical holdings, *Chinese Periodicals: International Holdings, 1949-1960* (Ann Arbor: 1961); the sponsorship of surveys in 1960 and 1964, on which Tsien's "East Asian Collections in America" was based; the study of personnel and training problems in Tsien's report on *Present Status and Personnel Needs of Far Eastern Collections in America* (Washington, D.C.: 1964); the holding of library panels at the XXVII International Congress of Orientalists in 1967 and at the Association for Asian Studies annual meetings in 1967 and 1968; and recent investigations into automation of East Asian bibliographic systems. The proceedings of the 1967 meeting of the Committee have been published under the title *Library Resources on East Asia*, *loc. cit.*

¹³ Since 1967 it has been issued as a section of the *Quarterly Review of Historical Studies* by the Educational Resources Centre in New Delhi and the Institute of Historical Studies in Calcutta.

¹⁴ Conference on Resources for Research on Southeast Asia, Honolulu, 1963, *Summary Report*, prepared by Walter F. Vella (Honolulu: East-West Center, University of Hawaii, 1963).

¹⁵ Tsuen-hsueh Tsien and Howard W. Winger (eds.), *Area Studies and the Library: the Thirtieth Annual Conference of the Graduate Library School, May 20-22, 1965* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966). The proceedings of this conference were also published in the *Library Quarterly*, XXXV (October 1965), 203-386.

⁸ The Committee published *Oriental Collections, U.S.A. and Abroad* (Ames, Iowa: 1949-52, 4 nos.). For information about the efforts of the committee see Elizabeth Huff, "The National Committee on Oriental Collections," *Library Resources on East Asia* (Zug, Switzerland: Inter-Documentation Company, 1968), pp 16-17.

⁹ "Interim Report on the Adequacy of American Research Library Collections and Service Pertaining to Southeast Asia and the Far East" (Philadelphia: 1951).

¹⁰ Nunn and Tsien, *loc. cit.*, pp 27-42.

¹¹ Conference on American Library Resources on Southern Asia, Washington, 1957, *Proceedings, Reports and Working Papers* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1957). The working papers were reprinted in the *Journal of Oriental Institute of the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda*, IX-X (1959-60).

including those on East Asian, South, and Southeast Asian resources, were presented. Some of the problems have also been frequently discussed by the Committee on East Asian Libraries during the last ten years. The Committee on Non-Western Resources of ACRL sponsored a preconference on "Library Collections for Non-Western Studies" before the 1966 ALA annual meeting in July.¹⁶ Asian materials and resources, among other topics, were discussed. Another conference of a similar nature will be held again in 1968.

Several years ago the Association for Asian Studies established in Taipei a Chinese Materials and Research Aids Service Center, which has since provided many American libraries valuable assistance in acquiring Chinese materials. More recently the Ford Foundation, in view of the inability of many specialized collections to obtain current Chinese materials, made a grant to ARL to establish a center for Chinese research materials in Washington to assist the efforts of American libraries in obtaining Chinese books and research tools.¹⁷

In developing Asian resources the need for cooperation and for exchange of ideas and information with Asian librarians has become increasingly obvious. Sponsored by the Committee on East Asian Libraries, a panel on "Library Resources in Oriental Studies"¹⁸ was held during the twenty-seventh International Congress of Orientalists, which convened at the University of

Michigan in August 1967. A number of Asian librarians attended the conference and presented papers on library resources in their respective countries. A series of meetings on Asian library resources and problems took place. Toward the end of the Congress a meeting was held to discuss the formation of an international organization of librarians. A proposal was approved for the organization of an International Association of Orientalist Librarians to "serve as a forum for the interchange of information of mutual interest to librarians interested in Asia, and to work toward the improvement of library facilities offered to Orientalists in all countries."¹⁹ The association is now being organized, and it is expected that it will contribute to the development of Asian resources throughout the world.

All these activities have no doubt contributed to the development of Asian library resources in the United States and abroad. Despite these efforts, however, many problems remain to be solved. Extensive efforts, notably cooperative acquisition²⁰ and the standardization of cataloging practices,²¹ have

¹⁹ "XXVII International Congress of Orientalists Library Panel and Meetings," *ibid.*, 3.

²⁰ For instance, Yale and Cornell have reached a cooperative agreement by which Yale acquires two copies of every Vietnamese book it can obtain and then catalogs them and sends a copy to Cornell with a set of cards. Cornell does the same for Thai materials. This cooperative program has had many problems. See Rolland E. Stevens, "Library Support of Area Study Programs," *CRL*, XXIV (September 1963), 389.

²¹ For instance, in the early 1950's the ALA Descriptive Cataloging Committee appointed a Committee on Cataloging Oriental Materials. The Committee, which was later succeeded by the current Far Eastern Materials Committee of the Cataloging and Classification Section of ALA's Resources and Technical Services Division, worked closely with the Orientalia Processing Committee, Library of Congress, and reviewed all pertinent ALA and LC rules of cataloging. The result was that extensive changes were made in ALA rules of entry and LC rules for descriptive cataloging. These revisions were first published in Library of Congress, Processing Department, *Cataloging Service Bulletin*, no. 42 (July 1957), pp. 1-22, and were reprinted in *Cataloging Rules of the American Library Association and the Library of Congress, Additions and Changes, 1949-1958* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1959). These revisions are also reflected in *Anglo-American Cataloging Rules* (Chicago: 1967). Since 1957 all major Far Eastern libraries in the United States have been cataloging according to the revised rules.

¹⁶ Warren M. Tsuneishi, "ALA Institute on Library Collections for Non-Western Studies," *Library of Congress Information Bulletin*, XXV (July 14, 1966), 408-409; Shirley Stowe, "Look to the East," *Library Journal*, XCI (August 1966), 3645-46.

¹⁷ Eugene Wu, "China Materials Development Center of the Association of Research Libraries," *Library Resources on East Asia*, loc. cit., pp. 47-50.

¹⁸ Papers presented to the library panel have not yet been published. For details of the panel and other library meetings, see "XXVII International Congress of Orientalists Library Panel and Meetings," *Newsletter of the Committee on East Asian Libraries, Association for Asian Studies*, XXI (October 1, 1967), 1-3; and Edwin G. Beal, Jr., "Report on the 27th International Congress of Orientalists in Ann Arbor, Michigan, August 13-19, 1967," *Library of Congress Information Bulletin*, XXVI (August 24, 1967), 577-79.

been undertaken to solve some of these problems. Some efforts, hardly adequate, have been made in many other areas. Among the most pressing problems today are, no doubt, how to understand the subject strengths, specialties, and rarities of the existing collections and how to make available resources more easily accessible to meet scholarly needs.

As already noted, the development of different Asian collections has been the result of a response to the different interests, needs, and emphases of various Asian studies programs. The present diversity of subject and area strengths and specialties of the existing collections is obvious. Some libraries have published numerous checklists, catalogs, and other types of guides to their resources; others have done little in this direction, and the scope and contents of their resources are little known. Worst of all, no comprehensive records of such guides to resources have been published. A bibliographical guide to Asian resources is the first and essential step toward a better understanding of these limited resources.²²

As revealed by an analysis of published sources about existing collections, most major libraries have been fairly active in presenting information about their Asian resources. Among them are Yale, Chicago, Cornell, Michigan, Harvard, Columbia, Princeton, California at Berkeley, the Hoover Institution of Stanford, the Library of Congress, and the New York public library. Many other libraries, such as Hawaii, Syracuse, and Washington (Seattle), have only recently become active in publishing information concerning their Asian holdings. While the Library of Congress and the New York public library have been ac-

tive in disseminating information concerning their specialized holdings on all areas of Asia, Harvard and Columbia have made available much information, comparatively speaking, about their Far Eastern resources, and Cornell has done likewise for its Southeast Asian collections. Few libraries, if any, have published much information about their South Asian materials.

An analysis of published information about Asian resources in American libraries indicates that of the three areas of Asia, the Far East is best represented in published literature, followed by South Asia. Southeast Asia is the most neglected area. In terms of individual countries, China and Japan have attracted most bibliographic attention. In subject fields, the social sciences, especially history, have been most active bibliographically. Science, except for recent Chinese Communist scientific literature, has received less bibliographic attention.

Does the published literature give a good overall view of existing resources? The answer is definitely no. The contents and scope of many smaller but valuable collections remain unknown; even the resources of many major collections have not yet been extensively studied, fully analyzed, and systematically surveyed. Too few checklists, handbooks, and other types of guides to resources have been published. Of the nine Southeast Asian countries, for instance, guides apparently exist to resources for only five. The need for more published information and for more guides to resources is great. More surveys should be conducted, bibliographies and checklists compiled, and handbooks and other types of guides to resources prepared.

While the contents of many collections remain little known, serious gaps in certain areas have been keenly felt by many scholars and librarians. A survey report published in 1959 pointed out the very significant gaps in the ac-

²² It was this consideration which led to our decision to compile a bibliographical guide to Asian resources in American libraries which is now included in a new book edited by the authors, *Asian Resources in American Libraries: Essays and Bibliographies* (New York: National Council for Foreign Area Materials and Foreign Area Materials Center, University of the State of New York, 1968).

quisition of certain current East Asian journals, monographs, and government publications.²³ Most of these gaps, unfortunately, have not yet been filled. In Southeast Asian resources, weaknesses and gaps have been found in a number of areas, including pre-World War II newspapers and periodicals, and political-party, trade-union, and other organization publications, and especially materials from Cambodia and Laos.²⁴ In the South Asian field, there is a clear picture of uneven holdings of resources. While current South Asian resources, including books, serials, and newspapers, are well represented in most of the major collections, few, if any, have been successful in developing retrospective acquisitions in the languages of the area. Issues of early South Asian newspapers are practically nonexistent even in the best collections in this country. On the basis of the large number of American scholars collecting materials from Asian or European libraries,²⁵ it can be said that the existing resources are inadequate to meet the needs of many scholars in a number of areas. The widespread feeling among scholars and librarians in the Asian fields is that there are too few collections and that few of the existing collections have great depth. The former is particularly true in the case of Southeast Asia²⁶ and the latter of South Asia.²⁷ There is no

doubt that existing resources should be further strengthened and gaps filled in at least some of the important areas to meet the needs of specialists.

While the inadequacy and gaps of existing resources have been clearly recognized by scholars and librarians, the failure to make the fullest use of available materials has not been sufficiently indicated. The need for more bibliographic work is obvious. For certain countries, such as Cambodia and Laos, practically no bibliographies have been published. To solve problems in this area cooperation is definitely needed. An ambitious approach to these problems is, of course, the establishment of a bibliographic center; another is the preparation and publication of a national union catalog for Asian materials in American libraries and a comprehensive guide to American library resources on Asia. Such approaches, however, are not practical and probably not possible at the present time. Therefore, less ambitious projects, such as cooperative acquisitions and exchange programs and the compilation of more indexes, checklists, and subject bibliographies should be undertaken.

Clearly, resources development and control continue to be the major problems for Asian collections in the United States. Approaches to these problems no doubt require cooperative planning and efforts. Extensive, systematic, and cooperative efforts remain to be undertaken to deal with them. To interested and ambitious librarians the further development of Asian resources and the solving of many of the difficult problems surrounding them will constitute great challenges. There is no doubt that Asian resources will continue to grow rapidly in the years to come because of an increasing national need for a better understanding of Asia and an expanding interest of American scholars in the study of the various aspects of Asian cultures and affairs. ■■

²³ Nunn and Tsien, *loc. cit.*, p. 38.

²⁴ Echols, *loc. cit.*, pp 250-51.

²⁵ Of a total of 90 scholarly works on China, Japan, and India published in 1965 by American university presses which we have examined, more than thirty used materials collected from Asian or European libraries, according to their prefaces. The figure for 1966 was even higher: thirty-eight out of a total of 102 were based on materials received from libraries in Asia or Europe as well as in the United States. Selection of titles for examination was based on the listings in the 1965 and 1966 issues of *Scholarly Books in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago in cooperation with American University Press Services).

²⁶ Echols, *loc. cit.*, p. 243.

²⁷ Louis A. Jacob, "South Asian Resources in American Libraries," *Asian Resources in American Libraries*, ed. by Winston L. Y. Yang and Teresa S. Yang (New York: Foreign Area Materials Center, University of the State of New York and National Council for Foreign Area Materials, 1968), p. 29.